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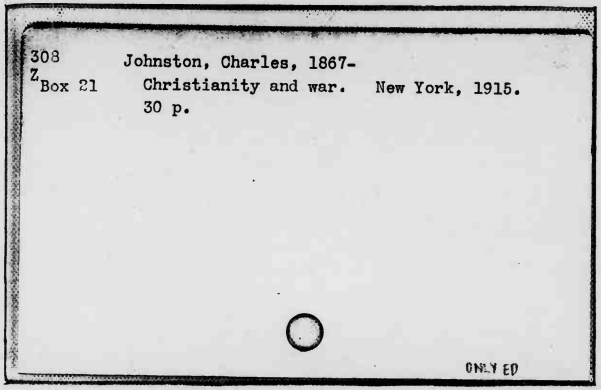

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Christianity and War

BY

CHARLES JOHNSTON

1915

THE QUARTERLY BOOK DEPARTMENT
P. O. Box 64, Station O, New York City

30 Nov 1915. 105

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

THERE is a widespread feeling, which has found eloquent expression in many places, that the great world war, in the midst of which we find ourselves, marks the failure of Christianity. The feeling is as well expressed, perhaps, as one may wish, in a poem entitled "Brotherhood," in a quarterly review, which opens thus:

> What's become of the Star in the East?
> Has battle-smoke of wars
> Obscured its beam in the crown of night,
> While doomed men in red darkness fight
> (With a groping sense of wrong or right)
> And clench and die, by the lurid blight
> Of the bloody eye of Mars?

The writer goes on to speak of the manger of Bethlehem, where the Prince of Peace was born, the fire of Pentecost, the Virgin Mother,—as though the very naming of these things were a stinging rebuke to the thought of war; as though armed combat were the polar opposite of the message of Jesus. And this is but one of many expressions, passionate, sincere, convinced, which one has heard

or read since the great war began. Is the view embodied in them true? Is it true that the mere fact of war, regardless of aim or principle, is a violation of the message of Christ? That he who fights, by that very act is sinning against the light?

There is so much that is appealing in the vision of universal peace, as a foretaste of the Great Peace, that one understands the passion of these appeals, as one grants their entire sincerity. Yet it may be held, on the other side, that they rest on a deep-seated confusion of principles; and therefore that, while ostensibly defences of Christianity, of the message of Jesus, they are really hostile to that message, and, if accepted and acted on to the full, would render the spiritual effort and work of the Master of no avail. One may say, indeed, that these protests rest neither on a spiritual nor on a material basis; that they sway between spiritual and material laws, and draw their support, quite illogically, first from the one, and then from the other. For if we take our stand on the sheer materialism of biology, it becomes evident at once that war, contest, conflict, is the universal law; that through the pressure of conflict all development has been gained; that, where conflict is lessened or withdrawn, all development flags, ceases, changes to retrogression.

Take the whole teaching of Darwin, whom we are beginning to recognize as a great religious teacher, not because he consciously held any doctrine, but because he made thinkable the limitless

development of the Soul. The central word of Darwin's message is Struggle: the world is a battlefield. Through struggle and through struggle only, is there growth, development, the endless progress toward perfection. And for Darwin, as, centuries earlier, for that great Indian scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita,* this is no battle of allegory, but genuine war, the sword of death pressing upon the combatants; one penalty only for failure, and that the ultimate penalty of the law. And by means of this conflict, in the very midst of its carnage,—illimitable beauty; fine flowers of perfection; forms, processes, magical in their loveliness! From the very clash of conflict ceaselessly arises the great song of life.

What, in Darwin's view, is the alternative to rigorous war, to valorous conflict, ceaselessly renewed? Is it peace? No, not peace, but degeneration, retrogression, rottenness. There is no halt. Either there is conflict against the forces of destruction, or surrender to the forces of destruction.

We have spoken of Darwin as a great religious teacher. Henry Drummond was one of the first so to recognize him. And giving to the world his finely constructive work, *Natural Law in the Spiritual World,* Drummond printed on the cover no conventional religious symbol, but the picture of a hermit crab. No conventional emblem, yet one, in its way, of poignant spiritual significance. For what, for the biologist, is the hermit crab's

history? At one point it gave up the contest. Shirking the endless renewal of armour that is proper to its genus, it took refuge in a mollusc's discarded shell, and thereby gained, on the instant, surcease from conflict at that point. With what ultimate result, Drummond discloses by figuring the hermit crab's body with the protecting mollusc shell removed: a shrunken, degenerate thing, ugly and deformed. That is the price paid for "peace."

If we take our stand on spiritual law, we shall see at once that the appeal to the material advantage of peace, the growth of wealth and comfort, the avoidance of pain, is not in essence a spiritual appeal, but a material one; that the defence of peace breaks down on this side also.

Those who hold that Christ was unalterably opposed to war, practically rest their case on the wonderful title, The Prince of Peace. The title comes from the prophetic words of Isaiah: "Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasing Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with jus-

tice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

But is it not strikingly evident that the peace here foretold is peace *after war?* Peace to be established through war—the war which Christ waged while he was visibly in the midst of his disciples, which he has waged without ceasing, and even now wages, with immortal endurance and with immortal valour. Until the kingdom is established on judgment and justice, that war, according to the word of Isaiah, must continue. The kingdom is to be established on the victory of righteousness; never on surrender and submission to the powers of evil. And what a martial ring in the splendid guarantee: The zeal of the *Lord of hosts* will perform this.

We may even think that one of those who heard the Master's teachings asked him, in so many words, and quoting the prophecy of Isaiah, "Art thou that Prince of Peace?" and that it was in direct reply to that question that the Master answered, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." The cognate passage in the third gospel is even stronger, "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? . . . Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." . . . The Prince of Peace, come to spread fire and sword . . .

But let us turn aside for a moment, to consider what the movement of peace, if carried to its logical

conclusion, would mean. The principle affirmed by the advocates of peace at any price is, that all violence, all use of force, is necessarily wrong; that righteousness must win its way purely by pacific influences; by its own attractiveness; by radiation and induction; by spiritual force of gravitation only. If we push this thought to its logical conclusion, then the use of force, not only in war, but in peace also, is wrong and indefensible. The police power is as indefensible as the machine gun. For although the presence of the police power, as the defence of our pacific activities, is not always visible, it is, neverthless, always effective; and a withdrawal of that power would be the signal for open plunder, as has been made evident time and again in revolutions and temporary dislocations of executive force. It is true that the advocates of peace at any price often assert that all men are by nature moral; that our crimes are the result of unjust laws, which create such injustices and inequalities that men are driven in despair to seek to rectify them by force; that the complete cessation of law would mean the complete cessation of crime; that all men, if left to do what is right in their own eyes, would do good only. But in the first place, the whole of human experience disproves this enticing theory; and, in the second, this doctrine is not Christianity but anarchism.

The wholly logical anarchist is compelled, if he follow his doctrine to the inevitable conclusion, not only to use no force, but to make no resistance to

force, when used by others against him; not only to suffer wrong, when directed against himself, but to look on without interfering, when wrong is inflicted upon others. He must not only accept outrage and violence aimed at him personally; he must likewise accept outrage and violence when directed against other men; must accept outrage and violence when directed against women and children. Nay, more, if the anarchist gospel be true, neither man nor woman has the right to resist violence and outrage, whether it be violence directed against person or property. We must not shirk the conclusions of our premises. If war be necessarily wrong, because all use of force is wrong, then self-defence, or defence of another, by man or woman, is equally wrong, equally opposed to ideal righteousness. Anarchists profess to believe this. It is doubtful if any of them would be courageous enough, or cowardly enough, to put it in practice. But it is not doubtful at all that, if put in practice, this rule of action would speedily reduce human life to a condition of squalid slavery, where the better and more conscientious, as well as the weaker and more helpless, men and women alike, would be the degraded slaves of the brutal, the lustful, the unscrupulous.

It is doubtful whether anyone, driving this principle of complete non-resistance, whether for oneself or for others, to its logical and inevitable conclusion, would have the courage to advocate it, to put it into practice. Yet there are people, perhaps a great many, who still believe in their hearts

that this, or something like it, is ideal Christianity, the final purpose of Jesus, the logical outcome of the Sermon on the Mount. Therefore it is now pertinent to inquire whether this be true: whether Jesus did in fact, by precept or by practice, teach such non-resistance as amounts to an unconditional surrender to the powers of evil, with the hope that the powers of evil will thereby be converted to good.

An unconditional surrender to the powers of evil: there is the kernel of the matter. And it is evident that the advocates of the anarchistic theory we have described either shut their eyes to the existence of active, purposeful evil in the world, or hold that, in fact, no such active evil exists in human nature; that men are naturally good, except where unjust laws make them wicked. We may, therefore, ask ourselves at the outset whether Jesus recognized the presence of active forces of evil, as distinct from the merely natural forces, such as flood and fire, storm and earthquake, which are so often fatal to human happiness. Did Jesus recognize and teach the existence of active evil?

The most direct answer is found in the story of his own temptation in the wilderness, a narrative which must come direct from the Master himself. Is it not the truth that, from the hour his ministry opened, with the baptism in Jordan, till its visible close at Golgotha, it was war, ceaseless war, with quarter neither given nor asked; war unflinching, magnificent, carried out practically single-handed?

What instantly followed upon that baptism? A period of serenity—"peace beginning to be"? No. The temptation in the wilderness.

As Christ was there alone, it follows that the narrative of the temptation must be his own. He gave it dramatic form, as so often with his message,—for where shall we find such perfection of drama, such supreme expression of character in speech, as we find, for example, in those two prayers, of the Pharisee and the Publican? Where shall we find a soliloquy as eloquent as that of the self-exiled Prodigal: "I will arise and go to my father"? So with the temptation in the wilderness. Its dramatisation does not diminish its truth. Rather it brings that truth to light: that the beginning of spiritual life is battle, battle against active evil; battle formidable to Christ himself.

It is rather the fashion, dating, perhaps, from the days of *Aucassin et Nicolette,* to speak of the Genius of evil as a jolly fellow, good company, with a fellow-feeling for human weaknesses. We may find an antidote to this verbal coquetting with evil in the record of the Master's trial, and his message that the essential character of the Adversary is treason, the despicable quality of treachery. In that temptation, he not only recognized, but met and conquered the power of evil, in a conflict which was unquestionably real and of tremendous moment. Let us suppose that, listening to the voice of the Tempter, Jesus had accepted the bribe of "the

kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them," as payment for worship of the power of evil: what a terrible result on the world's history must have followed! And it must be remembered that, time and again, during his mission, the same temptation came back to him. Enthusiastic and patriotic Jews were willing, not only to recognize in him the Messiah, the Anointed One, but "to take him by force and make him a king," the leader of an anti-Roman revolution in Palestine. Can we doubt what would have been the result? Given the Master's power turned to this end, acting through the instrumentality of war and politics, and world-empire would have been inevitable. We can find no leader in history, no leader of armies, who could have competed against him. Even in his parables, he thinks and speaks as a consummate general: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" Can one doubt the result, if the Master himself, with his piercing insight, his powers of organization and discipline, his sway over multitudes, had been in the place of the king in his parable?

Not only in the narrative of the temptation in the wilderness, but everywhere throughout his teaching, the Master explicitly recognizes both the existence of active forces of evil, and the constant operation of these forces in human life. It is he

who gives to the conscious direction of this evil power the title, "the prince, or, principle, of this world." And one may say with justice that not only was the whole mission of Jesus, from his baptism by John to his crucifixion, a conscious war against the active forces of evil, but that it was, further, a war carried on with precisely those powers which make a great general: the foresight, the patience, the endurance, the audacity, of a great military genius.

There is wonderful beauty and pathos and dramatic force in the opening of the campaign, immediately after the temptation in the wilderness, as recorded in the third gospel: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me . . . to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. . ."

From all the narratives of his speaking we get the sense of one who held his audiences spell-

bound with the perfect gift of eloquence; they forgot their homes and avocations, forgot hunger and thirst, so that he, as in a sense their host, was compelled to feed them with miraculous bread. We get the sense of that wondering fascination, almost of the beauty of voice, of tone, of gesture that must have embodied it. Is not beauty of tone implicit in this: "Consider the lilies how they grow . . . ?"

The Master took Isaiah's beautiful words directly to himself. He was the Anointed of the Spirit, sent to bear the good news, to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind.

We think of the tragedy of Gethsemane, in the garden on Olivet, of the awful hours of Golgotha. But all the tragedy of the betrayal, or the crucifixion, is already there, in that first sermon in his own Nazareth, where everyone who heard him had known him from childhood. He came, his hands full of gifts, knowing of a surety that he had the power to heal broken hearts, to lift intolerable burdens, to open the bars before the captives; with both hands offering divine largesse.

Then the supreme tragedy of their answer: the answer of the blind to whom he offered sight, of the captives whom he would have set free, of the broken-hearted, to whom he offered his divine consolation. For what was the instant result of his appeal of fiery love? What response did the men of his own city make to it, they who had known

him from childhood; in whose synagogue, it would seem, it was his custom to read the lesson, week after week? What was the response, on the testimony of the same recorder? This was the response: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong . . . "

There is no more tremendous scene in history than that; no event which so clearly marks the line between the two views; on the one hand, the anarchistic fancy that all men are innately good, and that righteousness has only to show itself, to be accepted; and, on the other, the stern and terrible truth that righteousness, when it does flash forth clear as the sunlight, has this result: it lashes the active forces of evil into fury. That is what we see in the whole course of Jesus' mission: not an unbroken victory for gentleness and mercy, but, on the contrary, a ceaseless raging against him of active forces of evil.

We see him waging war, truceless, unremitting war, against active forces of evil, against cruelty and treachery and hate. And before we pour fiery condemnation upon the worshippers in Nazareth, let us consider whether the bringer of gifts has fared much better elsewhere; is he more cordially welcomed now?

Let us be just. Let us recognize that the impulse

of conflict lay not so much in the men of Nazareth, as in him who offered gifts to them: in Christ himself. It was his fiery challenge to the active forces of evil that kindled the contest. He was not on the defensive. He was leading the attack.

So, throughout the three years of his ministry, in the ceaseless marching and counter-marching through Palestine, he fought his fight, again and again facing violent death, again and again provoking the menace of violent death, only escaping death by the exercise of transcendent power because he knew that his hour was not yet come.

We have quoted an instance from the opening of his ministry. Here is one from the central period of his mission: "Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God; yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily,

verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him. . ."

We think of him as Prince of Peace. Peace, indeed, he might have had, at any moment of the long, fiery ministry, peace, at the cost of surrender. The terms of the Adversary he had from the beginning of the war: the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, as the price of surrender. Had he accepted the terms, he could easily have won the world. With his gift of consummate leadership, with the fierce devotion of his nation, the obstinate valour with which they fought about Jerusalem a generation later, victory would have been sure. He would have ranked as the greatest conqueror in history. From the human standpoint, supreme success; yet what a frightful tragedy of the soul would have been that surrender.

Perhaps there were those, tender-hearted, averse to the bitterness of conflict, who pleaded with him, begging him to stop the war. Yes, he could have stopped the war, on the instant, and won kingdoms. But he never stopped the war, he fought to the last as the supreme soldier. Clearly he saw the inevitable end. He was looking unescapable death in the eyes. On the very eve of the final tragedy he declared that he who drew the sword should perish with the sword. It was literally true, and his own fate proved it. He drew the sword—we have his own word for it—and perished with the sword.

One more example of the fiery provocation of his

spirit, this time from the closing act of the majestic tragedy: "Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be upon us, and on our children."

Is it not clear that the role of the pacificist was played, in this splendid and sombre drama, not by Jesus, but by—Pilate? It is he who, having the physical force at his disposal, refused to use it: refused to interpose, in protection, not of himself, but of one whom he held to be innocent, and who was threatened with violence. Pilate held his hand, put into practice the principle of non-resistance, and —thereby gained a fame that is undying. And we may hold that the part played by Pilate is the part played by every one who, whether in the name of principle, or through cowardice masquerading as principle, refrains from protecting, if necessary even to the shedding of blood, any innocent person threatened with violent wrong. To such will directly apply, in every such case, the Master's penetrating words: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

It is Pilate, therefore, not Jesus, who is the exemplar of the pacificist doctrine. Jesus must have recognized, and did recognize, that the effect of his teaching was, not to fill the hearts of those who heard it with peace, but, so far as they hardened their hearts against him, to lash them into frenzy; to arouse in them such impulses of violence as led them to try to stone him, to cast him over a precipice. Here, then, comes the test of the pacificist theory, as applied to Jesus. When he was forced to recognize the clear fact that his teaching had this provocative effect, that it led instantly to violence, to attempted murder, did he hold his peace? Did he take refuge in prudent silence, trusting that his virtue would make its way by radiation, by induction, insensibly winning all hearts by its inherent loveliness? For we must look the question squarely in the face. To follow a course which inevitably provokes violence, when one knows that violence will result, is to use violence. It is an act of war.

The answer is, that, through the whole course of his mission, Jesus used words that he knew were provocative; words absolutely certain to arouse hate, and to lash that hate to frenzy. Take this speech, recorded by the apostle of love: "Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they unto him,

We be not born of fornication; we have one father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. . . . Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?"

It would be impossible to conceive of language more provocative than that which the Master here uses. It is war and nothing less than war. We hold that he is here putting into practice the words —so startling in the mouth of him who is called the Prince of Peace—already quoted, "I came not to send peace, but a sword . . . I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" This is war, an active, aggressive war against active forces of evil, and, as has been said, the Master's whole mission was planned and carried on aggressively, like a campaign. None the less a campaign because he himself did not draw a material sword. The soldier who, in an attack upon the trenches, throws himself upon the bayonets of the enemy, so that the second line may attack the more effectively, is not less a warrior than he of the second line who profits by his sacrifice. And pre-

cisely such a sacrifice as this, was the death of the Master. It was an act, not of peace, but of war; an act, not of submission, but of aggression, of daring valour against active forces of evil.

What then of the Sermon on the Mount and the message of peace? The Sermon on the Mount is likewise, if we can see it, a forward move in that campaign against evil; a manual of discipline, teaching the soldiers of the Master certain lessons, without which they cannot fight effectively. It is impossible to conquer others, unless we have first conquered ourselves. It is impossible to command, unless we have first learned to obey. These very lessons, self-conquest and obedience, are the subject matter of the Sermon on the Mount. Then, as now, they are indispensable to the discipline of the soldier; not only, be it understood, the "soldier of the Cross," in the more conventional sense, but the soldier of regiment and battalion; the soldier of rifle and bayonet. He must take no thought of what he shall eat or what he shall drink or what he shall put on. He must positively give his life, to the uttermost, before he can rightly take his place on the battle-line; before he can rightly join in a charge. Far from unfitting men for conflict, the Sermon on the Mount is an unsurpassed manual of training for the soldier. At this moment, in the great world war, they are the best soldiers, who have best learned its lessons, and who follow them, not in word but in deed and in truth, whether they have the least inkling that it is in fact the

teaching of the Sermon on the Mount or no. Indeed, we may fearlessly say that those who believe that the precepts of that Sermon lead to pacificism, have never tried to put them into effect. A little practical experience of them will demonstrate that they are the rules of war.

What then of the injunction, "Resist not evil," which is quoted in their own support by the extreme advocates of non-resistance? "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also." It has been many times pointed out that this injunction, like the whole Sermon on the Mount, of which it is a part, is an injunction for disciples,—for those who have enlisted in the Master's warfare,—and for such this commandment defines the spirit in which that war must be waged. The soldier is not to fight for personal revenge, nor for personal motives of any kind,—least of all from the fear which will make even a coward turn to defend himself. The soldier's spirit is not this. It is the spirit which sinks self wholly in devotion to a cause; which can endure and welcome every personal hardship; which, when wounded, still moves unflinchingly to the certainty of other wounds. The soldier is not to love his life, because it is his, nor to seek to preserve it because it is his. The outpost who dispute the passage of an advancing enemy, are not fighting in self-

defence, because they are attacked; but because in the attack upon them their line is attacked. It is that line which they defend, and for its defence they defend themselves or lay down their lives as occasion may demand. This is the essential point in this teaching given to disciples. Self is to be as nothing, that the will of the Father, the cause of righteousness may be everything.

But the Master does not say—and this is the heart of the whole matter—if a man smite thy mother, or thy wife, on the right cheek, turn her face to be smitten on the left cheek also! He does not say, if a man take away the coat of an orphan, stand by and let him take the child's life also. He condemned the mean tendency of the mind to "get even" with an opponent. But what has this got to do with the defence of others, or with the enforcement of law, or with the hatred of evil?

Let us carry the matter farther. Saint Paul bids us *overcome* evil with good (Romans xii, 21); he bids us "abhor evil" (Romans xii, 9). Surely this is the very opposite of the surrender to evil, the refusal to defend others, who are subjected to evil. Surely the command of "the brother of the Lord," —Resist the devil!—includes resistance to the works of the devil, and to those who deliberately further these works. And what could be more devilish, more bestial, more cowardly, than cruel assaults on women and children, the cold, deliberate

murder of the defenceless? Who countenances these, countenances the devil himself.

Those who preach "peace at any price," would have us believe that the soldier and the soldier's business of war, fall under the ban of Christ's displeasure. But what do the records show? Time and again, Christ came into contact with soldiers, as with the centurion, who "had soldiers under him," and of whom Christ said, that not in Israel had he found so great faith. Is it recorded that on any such occasion, Christ expressed disapproval of war? Did he say, "Cease to be soldiers for the soldier's work is evil?" Did Paul, who also came again and again into contact with soldiers,—who for years was chained to a soldier? Was not the whole tenor of their teaching, Christ's as well as Paul's, that the soldier must be a good soldier, loyal, true, courageous, alert and valourous in duty; instant in the defence of the weak, the helpless?

It will be well to work this question out to the bitter end; in terms of the women and children dependent on oneself, or vividly within the circle of one's own habitual life; and then to face the question squarely: Am I ready to give these up to the unbridled forces of lust and cruelty? That anyone, facing the issue thus squarely, should remain for a moment in doubt as to what true moral and religious duty demands, is horrible. That anyone should believe that the Master Christ, the very soul of chivalry and courage, would counsel us through

vileness to make the great betrayal, is yet more horrible. Yet these ghastly distortions of his teaching, with their ghastly results, exist, and will exist, so long as the Adversary seeks to undo the Master's work.

Even by their position in the first gospel, the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are evidently the preparation, the drill, for the active campaign which was shortly committed to the Twelve; that campaign of which he said, "But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one." The Master clearly foresaw that, for his disciples, as for himself, the immediate result would be, not peace but the sword, the fire kindled upon the earth. And the most courageous of the disciples frankly applies to himself and his fellows the terms of war: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. . . . For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

It seems evident, then, that, however great, even infinite, his power, the Master could not use that power, throughout his mission, except in accordance with the laws of human life. He could not compel men to be holy, just and good; more than

that, his very persuasion, his most touching and penetrating appeals, where they were not obeyed with answering love, did not fall ineffective, but on the contrary lashed those who heard them into murderous fury. And in the face of that steadily growing fury, the Master carried on his war, and to that fury he sacrificed his life, exactly as does the soldier who throws himself upon the bayonets of the enemy. Neither the Master's death nor his rising again from the dead, altered the conditions of his warfare, or made it possible for him to wield his power, except in accordance with the laws of life. And never for a moment, from the hour of the Crucifixion to the present hour, has the conflict ceased—the war waged incessantly against the active forces of evil.

Immediately after the Resurrection, we find his living will pressing his disciples on to the same conflict. Peter drew the sword—and perished with the sword. Paul drew the sword, and quite literally Paul perished with the sword, beheaded. In his own words, he had fought a good fight; like his Master, a consummate soldier.

Therefore we are committed, by the ministry and the message of Jesus, to war, ceaseless war against evil; war, first of all, against the evil in ourselves, the evil of self-will, of self-indulgence, of all that throws us into opposition to the divine and holy Will.

On our failure to carry on this war against the evil in ourselves, the Supreme Law imposes this

penalty: that, shirking the inner conflict, we shall find, not peace but war in another form: external war, visible, material war, is forced upon us by the Law, even when, through moral cowardice, we had sought to evade it; and then we must wage it, and suffer its penalties and terrors, until such time as we manfully take up the spiritual war that was appointed for us—thus carrying the conflict to a higher and far more potent plane.

So we have the choice of where the war shall be waged—in the higher or the lower world; with coarser or with finer weapons. But we have not the choice of peace, before the day of the Great Peace,—the peace which comes through the victory of righteousness; the peace which passeth understanding; that peace which comes to every warrior, when righteousness wins the victory in his heart.

Thus Christ brings us the terrible revelation of war: "war in heaven," as the disciple of love calls it; war, the very essence of spiritual life. Here is the higher part of that truth, the beginning of which Darwin so lucidly disclosed: struggle, the struggle for life, first in the organic and then in the spiritual world; development through struggle only, whether it be the evolution of body or of soul; war everlasting.

Huxley, following Darwin, realized with vividness the full intensity of that war, which filled, as he saw, the whole natural world. With profound philosophic insight he divined that the organic con-

flict was not the whole of life, yet he did not catch the clue to the true solution. With a spiritual longing that was full of the most real pathos, he taught himself to seek a mitigation of the world war in a counter-current of the human heart making for mercy and pity and peace. With all his piercing insight into the law of life universally operant, he sought the solution in a suspension of the law of life, a backwash from the main current, that might in some sense neutralize it. But we have learned, in the years that have since passed, that the solution is in the other direction. The law of conflict is universal. Spiritual growth also, through unimagined vistas of perfection, must be won by fighting, by a life and death conflict against active forces of evil, of cruelty, treachery, hate. The alternative to that warfare is not peace. It is surrender, dishonour, undying shame.

The alternative is not peace, but surrender to the forces of active evil. In what sense, then, is Christ the Prince of Peace? What is his peace, the peace that, in the last hours of his supreme warfare, he gave to his disciples?—Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.—Not the world's peace, not the peace of surrender, but the warrior's peace, the peace that was in his own heart—in the garden; at Golgotha: the peace of supreme valour, acceptance, sacrifice; the peace that is in the heart of the warrior, dying with his face to the foe. Only in this sense is he the Prince of Peace.

It has often been said, by many who share the opinion of Count Tolstoi, that the primitive virtue of Christ's teaching was corrupted by the Emperor Constantine, when he gave the Christian religion a place in the state; when, in fact, he allied it with military power. It may, on the contrary, be maintained that, in doing this, Constantine brought Christianity closer to the Master's ideal; that he openly infused into it something of that soldierly spirit which the Master so conspicuously represents. But that spirit had never been absent. The spirit of the martyrs was not pacifist but warlike; martyrdom is an act of violence, an act of war. And we cannot doubt that those who fought to defend Christendom against organized attempts to destroy it, whether at the Battle of Tours, or in the hundred combats with militant Mahometanism, were but putting into practice the same martyr spirit, with just such change and adaptation as the new circumstances required.

The ideal of the Master is not passivity and supine non-interference, in face of wrong and violence to others; it is, on the contrary, war, tremendously active, creative, virile, soldierly. And we are profoundly convinced that, at each stage of world history,—and this is true of the present hour —the Master's ideal may, and should, be defended by fire and sword. The active forces of evil, of bare-faced treachery, of brutal cruelty, of malignant destructiveness, are as furiously opposed to his work now, as they were before the Passion. Where these

forces of evil embody themselves in human form, and take up fire and sword to destroy, then the Master's cause is best served by fighting fire with fire; by sword and bayonet and quick-firing guns. These, at such a juncture, are the true weapons of righteousness, as was the scourge which he wielded when he drove out those who debased his Father's temple.

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